



File Code: 1950

Date: August 17, 2009

Dear Interested Party:

I am pleased to announce that the **Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD)** are available for the **Inyo National Forest Motorized Travel Management Project**. I want to thank the many committed individuals and organizations who have given countless hours to participate in this effort. It was your hard work and productive interaction that ultimately enabled me to select an alternative that will provide a sustainable system of roads, trails, and areas to meet the recreational and access needs of local citizens and visitors from around the world while protecting important resource values.

Throughout this project, I have been impressed at the spirit of citizen stewardship and collaboration that members of the public brought to this project. This is particularly demonstrated by the Collaborative Alternative Team, a team of individuals representing varied perspectives that worked through differences to develop a community-based alternative for a sustainable motorized transportation system on the Inyo. I am impressed with their work and, after careful analysis, believe that a slightly modified version of their collaborative alternative (Alternative 6) will provide the best transportation system for this Forest.

From the start, this project has been about balancing the various needs for motorized recreational opportunities with the need to protect natural and cultural resources. Every alternative that has been analyzed does this, with different weight placed on the various – sometimes conflicting – values and resources. In reviewing Alternative 6, and evaluating the input I received during the DEIS comment period, I made some slight changes that responded to this input while still honoring the theme that was weaved into its development. I have selected Modified Alternative 6 because it best meets the purpose and need and responds to the issues of motorized access and recreational opportunities, and natural and cultural resource protection.

The following summary highlights the main points of my decision. Greater detail of the decision and the analysis that led to it can be found in both the ROD and the FEIS. A key element of my decision includes the limitation of motor vehicle travel by the public to the designated National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) roads, trails and areas. To ensure a reasonable level of motorized recreation access to recreation opportunities, I have decided to:

- Add 122 miles of motorized trails open to all trail vehicles, 20 miles of ATV trails, and 15 miles of motorcycle trails to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS).
- Add 850 miles of high-clearance native surface roads to the NFTS, for a total of 2,035 miles of high-clearance roads open to all vehicles (highway-legal and non-highway-legal).
- Allow motorized mixed use (highway-legal mixed with non-highway legal) on 5.6 miles of NFTS passenger car roads contingent on the concurrence of the California Highway Patrol.
- Convert 6 miles of existing NFTS road to motorcycle trail, 8 miles of NFTS road to ATV trail for vehicles 50-inches wide or less, and 159 miles of NFTS road to 4WD motorized trails open to all trail vehicles.
- Close 30 miles of existing NFTS roads to public motor vehicle use and retain 29 miles of those roads for Forest Service administrative use (including motor vehicle use authorized by contract, permit, or other written authorization). One mile of the NFTS will remain closed to all motorized use to resolve private property concerns.



This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to the regulation at 36 CFR 215. Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45-days of the publication date of the legal notice of decision in the Inyo Register, the newspaper of record. Detailed procedures for appeal are located in the ROD. For information about the actual beginning of the appeal period, please visit the Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo/projects/ohvroute5.shtml>

Our efforts to share the specific details with you in public meetings begin in earnest during the third week of September. The list of all scheduled public meetings is below. I have scheduled these meetings so that you will have time to review my decision and can come prepared to seek the clarification you need. I also ask that you be prepared to sign-up to help me implement this decision. As this system of roads and trails is as much yours as mine; I want to hear your thoughts about such things as highest priorities for resource mitigations, signing, and route restoration – and how we'll work together to get them done. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my decision with you at these meetings.

Date	City	Location	Time
September 3	Hawthorne, NV	Mineral County Library 110 First St.	4:00-6:00 pm
September 21	Ridgecrest, CA	Kerr McGee Center 100 W. California Ave	6:00-8:00 pm
September 22	Mammoth, CA	Minaret Mall, Suite Z 437 Old Mammoth Rd.	6:00-8:00 pm
September 23	Bishop, CA	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, 849 Home St.	6:00-8:00 pm
September 24	Dyer, NV	Dyer Community Center	6:00-8:00 pm
September 28	Lone Pine, CA	Mt. Whitney Ranger Station 640 S. Main St.	"Drop-in" Session 11:00-3:00 pm

Lastly, I would like to share my deep appreciation for the role you've played in shaping this decision. Based upon the many positive comments about the community-based alternative I received during the comment period, I am hopeful that you will join me and members of the Collaborative Alternative Team as we implement this decision. To ensure the legacy of cooperation and the ideals of citizen stewardship that this group espoused, I urge you to participate in all that is still to come in the management of the Inyo National Forest.

Sincerely,



JIM UPCHURCH
Forest Supervisor